

5 Menu Items Every Deli Needs to Offer

As the name suggests, a delicatessen specializes in cold cuts, cheeses, and prepared salads — all the ingredients that make made-to-order sandwiches a customer favorite. While many delis also feature a few hot menu options, most of their bestsellers are served



cold. Whether you're opening a new deli or refreshing your existing menu, these five staples are the foundation of any successful operation.

1. The Classic Club Sandwich

A true deli essential, the club sandwich combines flavor, texture, and visual appeal. Traditionally built with three slices of toasted bread, each layer is stacked with meats like turkey, chicken, ham, bacon, or roast beef, along with lettuce, tomato, and cheese. Some delis add extras such as pickles or peppers, then dress



it with mayonnaise or Russian dressing before cutting it into quarters and securing each with a sandwich pick.

For easy prep and presentation, stock up on bread knives, deli paper and sandwich wrap paper, to keep orders neat and professional.

2. Soup of the Day

Adding a rotating soup of the day brings warmth and comfort to your menu, especially during colder months. Popular deli soups include chicken noodle, mushroom barley, and French onion, along with hearty vegetable or split pea.

To keep soups fresh and ready for service, use soup kettles or soup warmers that maintain the perfect serving temperature without overcooking. For portion control and consistent presentation, keep ladles and soup bowls on hand.

3. A Variety of Salads

No deli menu is complete without a mix of bound salads especially the classics like potato salad, chicken salad, and tuna salad. These can be served as side dishes or as fillings for sandwiches and wraps.

Prep is key: use mixing bowls; portion scoops and food storage containers to keep salads fresh and consistent throughout the day.

4. Hot Deli Sandwiches

Hot sandwiches bring variety and heartiness to any deli menu. The French dip, made with thin-sliced roast beef and served with au jus, remains a favorite. Other classics include the Reuben (corned beef, Swiss,

sauerkraut, and Russian dressing on rye), hot brisket, and grilled pastrami sandwiches.

Use [griddles](#) or [panini presses](#) for quick, consistent heating, and [cutting boards](#) to prep ingredients safely and efficiently.

5. Side Dishes

Round out your deli offerings with the perfect sides. Favorites like French fries, onion rings, hummus, coleslaw, and health salads enhance the main dish and create a more satisfying meal. Offer pickles and olives as small add-ons to boost perceived value.

Keep sides crisp and ready with [food warmers](#) and serve them neatly in [disposable deli containers](#), or [food baskets](#) for dine-in or takeout service.

Building Your Deli Menu

Starting with these deli staples helps create a balanced, familiar menu that customers will recognize and enjoy. Once you've established your core offerings, don't hesitate to expand into regional specialties or seasonal favorites to keep your menu fresh.

With the right [deli equipment](#) and [restaurant supplies](#), your operation can run efficiently while delivering the quality and consistency that keeps customers coming back.

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